

Statement of Joanne Gorenstein
Before the
Aging Committee
February 28, 2012
Senate Bill 1185

Senator Prague, Representative Serra and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joanne Gorenstein. I am presently the Licensed Administrator of Cheshire House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Waterbury, CT, a subsidiary of Ryders Health Management. I have been in the nursing home business for several decades, in many different capacities. As a matter of fact, I retired, but returned to the industry because of my passion for giving excellent care, which Ryders Health Management aspires to, and my concern for what's happening to this industry.

Before I comment on several bills, I would like to say that the State can't continue to create inordinate mandates that increase financial burdens on an already financially strapped and ailing industry. Moreover, the bills I will comment on are, to a large extent, redundant. The nursing homes are already mandated to provide most of the explicit requirements set forth in those bills.

SB 137 – We already train staff regarding retaliation against residents who complain. That is part of a mandatory in-service all staff must attend. It is part of the Resident's Bill of Rights and every in-service we give regarding respect, dignity and good care. Are we now to spend time and money on more of the same? Again, this will only take away from the time we have to spend with the residents.

SB 140 – **We already have mandated forms of a grievance committee as follows:**

- A Grievance Book that logs all complaints and how we addressed those complaints, verified by the interdisciplinary care team and the resident/responsible party. The State requests to review the Grievance Log upon annual survey.
- Timely Resident Care Conferences mandated by the State/Federal government. The resident and/or responsible parties and all caretakers attend these conferences. Any issues, medical or psychosocial, are discussed at that time. All who attend sign in for verification that the conferences occurred and any issues/concerns are promptly addressed.
- The QIS (Quality Indicator Survey) by which all surveyors are trained deal face-to-face with family members, visitors and residents. They have lengthy interviews that they must complete at the time of survey. If there are unresolved issues that a surveyor detects, they are brought to the attention of the Director of Nursing and the Administrator. These issues could result in a citation if the State is not satisfied with the way the facility handled them.

SB 177 – How can anyone **guarantee** the behavior of any employee? We require references, do criminal background checks, drug screens and ensure licenses are current. Additionally, we have a two-week orientation on every new employee. What more does

the government think we should do? Turnover and orientation is time consuming and expensive. Why wouldn't we want to hire the best to enhance the care and promote the well being of our residents and the reputation of our facility?

I am very upset about the above bills. They will only increase the time spent away from caring for the residents without increasing the quality of care. It appears that those unfamiliar with what goes on day-to-day in a nursing home have written these bills. I would like to invite each and every one of you to come to Cheshire House. We give superlative care. Most of our residents are on Medicaid and we are struggling. Our Medicare rates were cut by 11% and we lose money every day on every Medicaid resident. There is no replacing what we do here and it's about time that the real issue of under funding the industry is addressed.

Thank you for your attention.